

1 1. An storage unit for dispensing containers in a selectively cascading first-in, first-out
2 manner, the storage unit comprising:

3 a receiving area configured to receive containers;

4 a dispensing area configured to provide containers;

5 a storage track configured to convey containers from the receiving area to the
6 dispensing area; and

7 a selectively engageable stop configured to hold containers at the dispensing area if
8 the selectively engageable stop is engaged.

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10 2. The unit of claim 1, wherein the selectively engageable stop is further configured to pass
11 containers from the dispensing area to another storage unit if the selectively engageable stop
12 is disengaged.

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14 3. The unit of claim 1, wherein the selectively engageable stop is further configured to
15 redirect containers from the dispensing area to a storage track of a cascaded storage unit.

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17 4. The unit of claim 1, wherein the receiving area and the dispensing area are arranged
18 such that the dispensing area of a first stacked storage unit substantially overlaps with the
19 receiving area of a second stacked storage unit.

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21 5. The unit of claim 1, wherein the storage track is configured to convey specific containers
22 selected from the group consisting of barrels, bottles, boxes, cans, cartons, casks, crates,
23 drums, jars, kegs, packages, sacks, tins, and tubs.

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25 6. The storage unit of claim 1, wherein the storage track comprises a receptor track
26 member configured to convey containers from the receiving area and a provider track
27 member configured to convey containers to the dispensing area.

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2 7. The storage unit of claim 6, further comprising a redirection member configured to
3 redirect containers from the receptor track member to the provider track member.
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5 8. The storage unit of claim 6, wherein at least one of the track members is nearly
6 horizontal.
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8 9. The storage unit of claim 6, wherein at least one of the track members is selected from
9 the group consisting of a shelf, a conveyer belt, and rollers.
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11 10. The storage unit of claim 6, wherein at least one of the track members comprises at least
12 one fillet.
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14 11. The storage unit of claim 1, wherein the selectively engageable stop comprises a
15 member selected from the group consisting of a slat, a panel, a pin, and a latch.
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17 12. The storage unit of claim 1, wherein the selectively engageable stop is removable.
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19 13. The storage unit of claim 1, wherein the selectively engageable stop is pivotally attached
20 to the storage track.
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22 14. The storage unit of claim 1, wherein the selectively engageable stop is electronically
23 actuated.
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25 15. The storage unit of claim 1, wherein the selectively engageable stop further comprises a
26 spring.
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1 16. The storage unit of claim 1, wherein the selectively engageable stop is counter balanced.

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3 17. The storage unit of claim 1, further comprising at least one track height adjustment
4 member configured to adjust the height of the storage track.

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6 18. The storage unit of claim 17, wherein the at least one track height adjustment member is
7 further configured to hold the storage track in an inclined position.

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9 19. A method for dispensing containers in a selectively cascading first-in, first-out manner,
10 comprising:

11 receiving a container on a storage track; and

12 holding the container to prevent the container from passing to another storage unit
13 vertically aligned with the storage track if a selectively engageable stop is engaged.

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15 20. The method of claim 19, further comprising passing the container to another storage unit
16 vertically aligned with the storage track if a selectively engageable stop is disengaged.

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18 21. The method of claim 19, wherein selectively engaging a stop further comprises
19 electronically engaging the stop.

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21 22. The method of claim 19, wherein placing a container on the storage track comprises
22 using a mechanical device to place a container on a track.

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24 23. A storage unit for dispensing containers in a selectively cascading first-in, first-out
25 manner, the storage unit comprising:

26 means for conveying containers to a redirection member;

1 means for conveying containers from the redirection member to a dispensing area;
2 and
3 means for selectively passing containers from the dispensing area to another storage
4 unit.
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